

Message Text

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SUBJECT: TORTURE TRIAL ENDS: DEFENDANTS SENTENCED

REF: ATHENS 6796

1. THE LONG, HOT SUMMER OF THE TORTURE TRIAL CONCLUDED ON SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, WITH THE SENTENCING OF SIXTEEN MILITARY POLICE (ESA). FOUND GUILTY OF HAVING METHODICALLY CARRIED OUT TORTURE ON THEIR VICTIMS DURING THE YEARS OF THE MILITARY DICTATORSHIP (1967-1974), SIXTEEN OF THE THIRTY-ONE DEFENDANTS (TWELVE OFFICERS AND FOUR ENLISTED MEN) WERE SENTENCED TO PRISON TERMS RANGING FROM FIVE MONTHS TO TWENTY-THREE YEARS. SOME ALSO WERE DEPRIVED OF THEIR POLITICAL RIGHTS FOR A PERIOD OF TEN YEARS. FIFTEEN WERE ACQUITTED

2. THE MOST SEVERE SENTENCE WAS IMPOSED ON LT COL NICHOLAOS HADJIZISSIS, FORMER CHIEF OF THE MILITARY POLICE HDQTRS, WHO FACES TWENTY-THREE YEARS IN CONFINEMENT AND A TEN-YEAR LOSS OF HIS POLITICAL RIGHTS. THEODOROS THEOPHILOYANNAKOS, A FORMER LT. COL., WAS BOTH DEMOTED TO THE RANK OF PRIVATE FOR HAVING BEEN A DISGRACE TO THE ARMED FORCES AND WAS SENTENCED TO TWENTY YEARS FOR HIS ROLE IN THE TORTURES. MAJOR ANASTASIOS SPANOS, ONE A KEY FIGURE IN THE ESA BRANCH OF POLICE INVESTIGATIONS, LIKEWISE, RECEIVED A TWENTY-YEAR

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SENTENCE.

3. OTHER OFFICERS WERE PENALIZED ACCORDING TO THEIR RESPECTIVE DEGREE OF RESPONSIBILITY IN THE TORTURE PROCESS. FOR INSTANCE SOME JUNIOR OFFICERS AND ENLISTED MEN RECEIVED SENTENCES OF FIVE MONTHS. THE SENTENCES CAN BE APPEALED

4. BY ITS VERY NATURE, THIS TRIAL HAS CAPTIVATED CONSIDERABLE PUBLIC INTEREST. WHILE POLICE BRUTALITY IS NOT UNKNOWN IN THE NATION'S JAILS, MANY GREEK OBSERVERS WERE ALTERNATELY FASCINATED AND REPELLED BY THE INHUMANITY INFLICTED BY THE MILITARY POLICE ON THE POLITICAL PRISONERS DURING THE DICTATORSHIP AS REVEALED IN THE TRIAL PROCEEDINGS. IN RENDERING ITS VERDICT AGAINST THE GUILTY, THE COURT REJECTED THEIR PLEAS OF INNOCENCE AND/OR CLAIMS THAT THEY WERE ACTING UNDER THE ORDERS OF SUPERIORS. IN EFFECT, THE COURT NOT ONLY CONDEMNED THE INDIVIDUAL MEN, BUT THE SYSTEM-- THE JUNTA--WHICH PRODUCED THEM. KUBISCH

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